

JUNE 2003

# CAMP *Bonneville news & information*

**A**t six square miles, Camp Bonneville is one of the largest parcels of undeveloped land in Clark County. Despite its size, many county residents know very little about this property, from its past as a military training camp to the present plans to clean it up and redevelop it for a regional park and other specific community uses. Because of Camp Bonneville's enormous potential value to the community, Clark County is currently pursuing early transfer of the property from the U.S. Army. This newsletter will be issued periodically to broaden awareness of Camp Bonneville, explain the early transfer process, and provide information about cleaning the property so it can be safely used by the community.

## **Army closes Camp Bonneville**

In 1995, Camp Bonneville was one of several facilities nationwide selected for transfer and reuse by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC). Clark County hopes to receive the property from the Army by September 30, 2003 by way of an early transfer. With Army funding, the county will then oversee cleanup of the property to remove unexploded ordnance (UXO) and various contaminants. Once it meets rigorous state and federal safety standards, Camp Bonneville will become available for the community uses described on the next page.

## **County is local redevelopment authority**

When the military closes a base, it asks the local community to form a local redevelopment authority to prepare a reuse plan for the property. The plan is prepared with extensive public input, reflecting the community's views on how the property should be redeveloped.

As the Camp Bonneville LRA, Clark County formed an LRA Reuse Planning Committee, which established seven guiding principles for planning. These required the reuse plan to be self sustaining; locally focused and directed; an open process; considerate of surrounding neighborhoods; addressed to overall community need; based on cooperation and consensus building; and environmentally sensitive.

In all, 250 members of the community offered input into the

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## **FACTS about Camp Bonneville**

- ❁ A 3,840-acre U.S. Army facility located in southeast Clark County, 12 miles east of Vancouver and seven miles north of the Columbia River
- ❁ Established in 1909 as a drill field and rifle range for Vancouver Barracks and used primarily as a military training camp
- ❁ Contains about 2,250 forested acres
- ❁ Situated at the edge of the Cascade foothills, with elevations ranging from 289 feet to almost 1500 feet



creation of a reuse plan for Camp Bonneville, which was drafted in 1998 and finalized in 2003. The reuse plan balances activities for public recreation and education with open space and wildlife areas. Plan elements are listed below.

## COMMUNITY USES for Camp Bonneville

- Regional park
- Law enforcement training center
- Retreat center/outdoor school
- Native American cultural center
- Clark College environmental education
- Trails and nature area
- FBI firing range
- Possible law enforcement and public firing ranges
- Timber resource management area
- Large wildlife habitat area

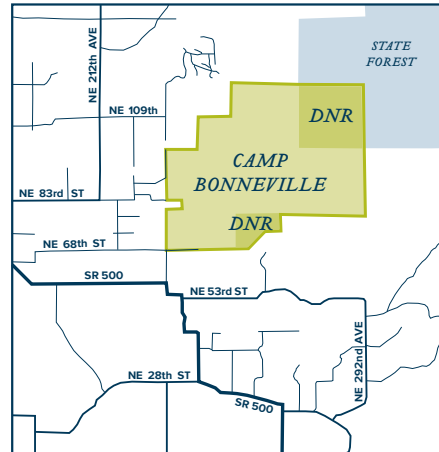
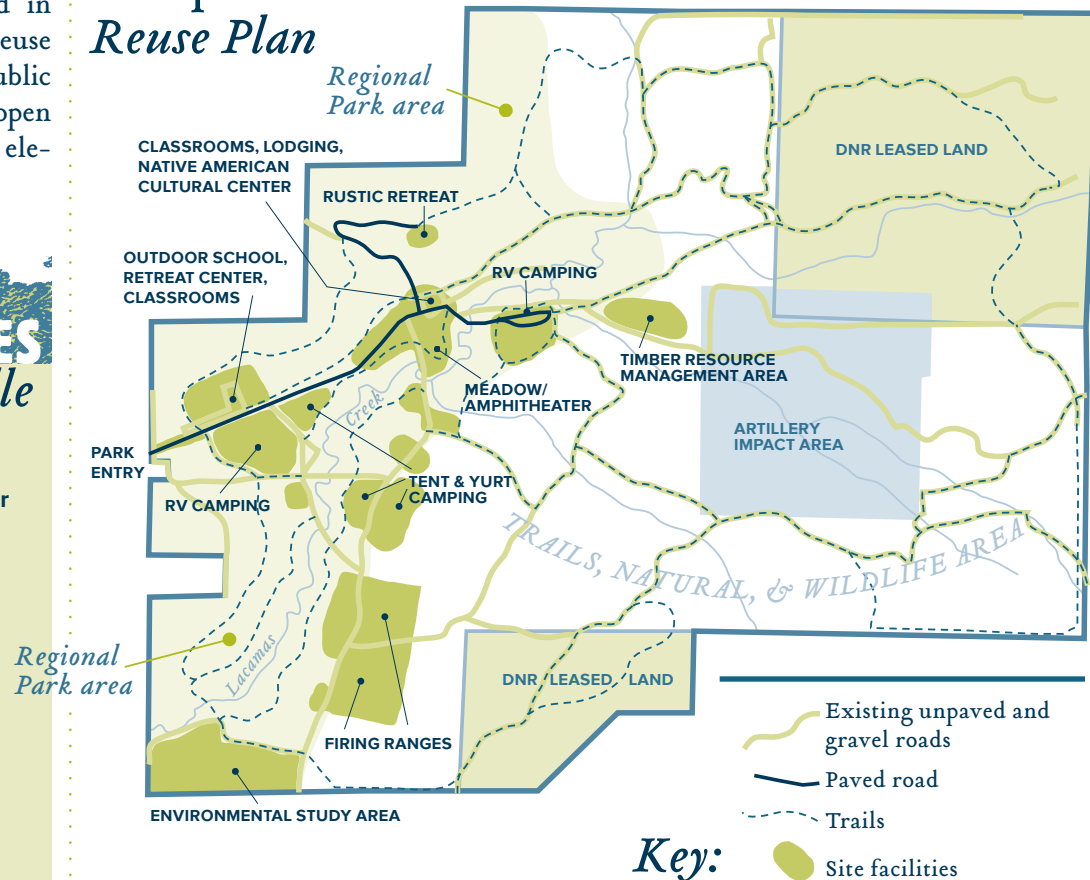
### Safety is the first priority

Before the reuse plan can be implemented, the property must be made safe for the community to use. It must be cleared of UXO and hazardous and toxic waste, including any groundwater contamination. Investigations are being conducted to estimate the extent of overall contamination and UXO as well as the cost of cleanup, which is the Army's responsibility. Depending on investigation results, cleanup could take between three and five years. After cleanup, reuse plan implementation would be phased in over a five-year period.

### Early transfer

Early transfer would allow Clark County to receive ownership of

## Camp Bonneville Reuse Plan



Camp Bonneville from the Army before the property is cleaned up. Following early transfer, the county would direct the cleanup effort at Camp Bonneville using funds guaranteed by the Army. The county would hire specialty contractors to clean the property to state and federal standards.

Safety measures will be in place to ensure that any areas that still require cleanup will not be acces-

sible to the public. The Washington Department of Ecology will provide guidelines for hazardous material cleanup. The federal Environmental Protection Agency will serve as a resource to the DOE.

As a condition of early transfer, the county is required to have cost-overrun insurance, which the Army will pay for. Even if the insurance company limits are exceeded, the Army is still ultimately responsible for ensuring cleanup is accomplished.

### Cleaning up while the money lasts

In addition to having local control, there is another compelling reason why many people believe early transfer is the best option for the future of Camp Bonneville. BRAC funding will be sharply reduced in 2004 and 2005. This means that



unless Camp Bonneville is transferred to Clark County by September 30, 2003, substantially less money will be available for cleanup and the property could be mothballed. Cleanup could be postponed indefinitely, prolonging the potential risks to the community from contaminants, UXO, and increased fire hazards from an unmanaged forest. The property would be unavailable for the various community uses identified in the reuse plan.

### Public involvement

A Restoration Advisory Board consisting primarily of Camp Bonneville neighbors was appointed by the Army to provide community feedback on cleanup issues to the Army and to regulators. The RAB has met regularly for several years to discuss issues of interest and concern related to cleanup and future reuse of the property. The RAB will exist until Camp Bonneville is turned over to Clark County.

Following early transfer, Clark County will establish a new community group that represents a wide variety of stakeholders and community interests. This group will

provide feedback on issues relating to cleanup and reuse. The county will also hold periodic public meetings to address community questions and concerns.

### What's next?

Clark County, the DOE, and the Army need to agree on the terms and degree of cleanup and ensure that funding is adequate. If final negotiations are acceptable to all parties and the transfer is successful, then the cleanup process will begin, followed by implementation of the reuse plan.

If cleanup progresses on schedule, a regional park could open at Camp Bonneville sometime between 2011 and 2013. Revenue to develop the park will likely come from a combination of grants, community partnerships, selective timber management, concessions, and park fees. Redevelopment of Camp Bonneville will be self-sustaining to avoid additional cost to taxpayers.

There will be no large-scale clear-cutting of trees at Camp Bonneville. Selective thinning will be conducted in phases to maintain forest health and reduce fire hazards.

## COMMUNITY MEETING

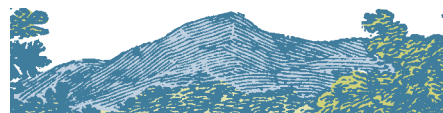
Learn more about Camp Bonneville and plans for its future

**Date:** Wednesday, July 30

**Time:** 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Dollars Corner Fire Station, 21609 NE 72nd Ave., Battle Ground

Following a brief presentation, staff from Clark County, the Department of Ecology, and the Army will answer audience questions.



This newsletter is available electronically and in hard copy. To add or delete a name from the newsletter mailing list, to be informed about future community meetings, or to request a speaker on Camp Bonneville issues for your group or organization, please contact Don Strick at 397-6012 ext. 8 or e-mail [don.strick@clark.wa.gov](mailto:don.strick@clark.wa.gov). If you have a specific question or concern about Camp Bonneville, contact Brian Vincent at 397-6118 ext. 4949 or e-mail [brian.vincent@clark.wa.gov](mailto:brian.vincent@clark.wa.gov).



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